

COMMUNITY COMPOST AND FOOD WASTE REDUCTION (CCFWR) PROJECT

FY 2020 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Please note that this document has been updated with additional questions related to this funding opportunity as of May 14, 2020

General Questions

Q: What support will USDA be able to offer applicants during the application process?

A: USDA is happy to field any general, high-level inquiries regarding the application process. However, USDA is unable to offer specific guidance on how to craft, structure or write one's proposal. In an effort to provide unbiased support to all those interested in the funding opportunity, USDA will refrain from providing advice that cannot otherwise be obtained through the resources that have been made publicly available via www.farmer.gov/urban and Grants.gov.

Q: Will USDA host a webinar about this funding opportunity?

A: Yes. NRCS will host a webinar about the CCFWR Project on June 4, 2020 at 2:00 PM Eastern Standard Time. The presentation will provide an overview of the CCFWR Project purpose, eligibility, and basic requirements for the submission of an application. To register for the CCFWR webinar, visit the [registration webpage](http://registration.webpage). The webinar will be recorded and posted at www.farmer.gov/urban.

Q: If I have problems with Grants.gov, will USDA staff help me submit or accept my application package?

A: No. USDA cannot support applicants regarding Grants.gov accounts or provide applicants technical assistance with the Grants.gov system. The Grants.gov technical support center can be reached at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov.

Q: Do I have to register with Grants.gov before submitting an application through Grants.gov?

A: Yes. The applicant must be registered with Grants.gov. There is a one-time registration for using Grants.gov, regardless of the Federal agency you may be submitting an application to through Grants.gov. Information about how to register is included on the Grants.gov registration page. If you are with an institution, we strongly recommend that you reach out to your, e.g., Grants Office, to confirm that your institution is registered with Grants.gov.

Q: What is involved in the Grants.gov registration process?

A: More detailed information is included on the Grants.gov registration page and the Grants.gov On-line User Guide. The following is a general overview.

1. Obtain a DUNS number (optional for Individual applicants).
2. Register with SAM.gov (optional for Individual applicants). Organization Applicants will not be able to move on to Step #3 until this step is completed.
3. Create a Grants.gov username and password. You will need to create a Grants.gov user profile by visiting the Get Registered section of the website.



4. The E-Business Point of Contact (POC) at your organization must respond to the registration email from Grants.gov and login at Grants.gov to authorize you as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR). Note there can be more than one AOR for an organization.
5. At any time, you can track your AOR status by going to the Applicant Login with your username and password.

Q: How long does the registration process take?

A: The registration process must be completed prior to submission of an application and the amount of time to register can vary. You should allow two full weeks to complete all registration steps, but additional time may be required.

Q: Is there a cost to use the System for Award Management (SAM)?

A: SAM is an official website of the U.S. government. There is no cost to use SAM. You can use this site for free to register to do business with the U.S. government; update or renew your entity registration; check status of an entity registration; and search for entity registration and exclusion records. More detailed information on how to use SAM is included on the [SAM.gov Help page](#).

Program Information

Q: Where can I get more help if I still have questions about the Community Compost and Food Waste Reduction (CCFWR) Project or application?

A: The Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Team strongly recommends that you read the CCFWR Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO) before submitting questions. If you still have questions after reading the NFO, you can forward your question to: UrbanAgriculture@usda.gov.

Q: What funding instrument type will be used for CCFWR pilot projects?

A: The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will enter into cooperative agreements with local or municipal governments in no fewer than 10 states.

Q: What is a cooperative agreement?

A: A cooperative agreement is a legal instrument of financial assistance between a Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity and a non-Federal entity that, consistent with 31 U.S.C. 6302–6305:

- a. Is used to enter into a relationship the principal purpose of which is to transfer anything of value from the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity to the non-Federal entity to carry out a public purpose authorized by a law of the United States (see 31 U.S.C. 6101(3)); and not to acquire property or services for the Federal government or pass-through entity's direct benefit or use;
- b. Is distinguished from a grant in that it provides for substantial involvement between the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity and the non-Federal entity in carrying out the activity contemplated by the Federal award.
- c. The term does not include: (1) A cooperative research and development agreement as defined in 15 U.S.C. 3710a; or (2) An agreement that provides only: (i) Direct United States Government cash assistance to an individual; (ii) A subsidy; (iii) A loan; (iv) A loan guarantee; or (v) Insurance.



Eligibility Information

Q: Can Individuals apply?

A: Individuals are not eligible to apply for the CCFWR Project. USDA offers a variety of funding opportunities to help farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners finance their businesses. Please visit www.farmers.gov/fund for information about programs that individuals are eligible for.

Q: I am a for-profit entity, am I eligible for this funding opportunity?

A: No. For-profit organizations and small businesses are not eligible.

Q: Are Tribal governments eligible for this funding opportunity?

A: No. Tribal governments are not eligible.

Q: Are State governments eligible for this funding opportunity?

A: No. State governments are not eligible.

Q: Can Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) apply for this funding opportunity?

A: No. IHEs as defined at [20 U.S.C. 1001](#) are not eligible.

Q: Who is eligible to apply?

A: CCFWR specifically provides assistance through a cooperative agreement to municipalities, counties, local governments, or city planners.

Q: How is eligibility determined?

A: Entities that are legally eligible for this specific funding opportunity are listed under section 12302 of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–334), ([7 USC 6923](#)).

Q: Is a description of the eligible applicant type available?

A: The following description of local government is from the Common Data Element Repository (CDER) Library. The CDER Library is the authoritative, federal-wide source of financial and business terms, which is based on the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Uniform Grants Guidance and the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act (DATA Act).

Entity Type	Description
Local government	Any unit of government within a state, including a county; borough; municipality; city; town; township; parish; local public authority, including any public housing agency under the United States Housing Act of 1937 (50 Stat. 888 (P.L. 75—412); special district; school district; intrastate district; council of governments, whether or not incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under State law; and any other agency or instrumentality of a multi-state, regional, or intra-state or local government.



Q: Where must eligible entities be located?

A: Eligible entities located in any of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Caribbean Area (Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands), and the Pacific Islands Area (Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) can apply.

Application Process

Q: What is the expected funding amount for a CCFWR Project?

A: The minimum award amount is \$45,000 and the maximum award amount is \$90,000.

Q: What is the time period for execution of a CCFWR Project?

A: Projects should be 2 years in duration.

Q: Do I need to partner with others?

A: Yes. Priority will be given to an applicant that collaborates with multiple partners (2 or more) on their CCFWR pilot project.

Q: Are letters from collaborators/partners required as part of the application submission?

A: Yes. Documentation (such as a separate letter of support from each partner) verifying support from collaborators is required as part of the application. Please read section D. Application and Submission Information of the [Notice of Funding Opportunity at Grants.gov](#) for more detailed information about this requirement.

Q: How might I find others to partner with?

A: USDA recommends reaching out to public or private, nonprofit or for-profit entities, including academic institutions and/or other appropriate professionals, community-based organizations, and local government entities in your area of the United States. The USDA Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement may have useful tools and information to assist with partnership development. You can find more information at www.usda.gov/partnerships.

Q: Do you have examples of projects that have been funded under this program?

A: No. CCFWR is a newly established program under the 2018 Farm Bill and fiscal year 2020 is the first time the Department is soliciting applications for this funding opportunity.

Q: What is the timeline of the Community Compost and Food Waste Reduction (CCFWR) Project?

A: USDA will accept applications on Grants.gov until midnight Eastern Standard Time on June 26, 2020. The agency anticipates announcing or notifying successful and unsuccessful applicants by August 31, 2020 and expects to have Federal awards in place by September 30, 2020.

Matching Requirement

Q: Are matching funds required?

A: Yes. This opportunity requires applicants to match 25 percent of total project costs. Federal funds may constitute no more than 75 percent of the total project budget. For example, if the total CCFWR project budget is \$90,000, the applicant would request \$67,500 in USDA funds (75 percent of the budget) and must provide a match amount of \$22,500 (25 percent of the budget). For assistance with calculating the required match amount, please use the [FY 2020 CCFWR Matching Calculator](#).

Q: What if I'd like to provide more than the 25 percent matching requirement?

A: There is no competitive advantage for an applicant to provide a match that exceeds the required amount. If the project is selected for funding, any exceeding amount will be considered voluntary.

Q: What types of match will be accepted?

A: Matching may be achieved with contributions of cash, supplies, services, third party in-kind contributions, or a combination of both from sources other than funds provided through this funding opportunity. Cash can be the recipients cash outlay, or cash donations from non-federal third parties or non-federal grants. In-kind can be the value of non-cash contributions typically in the form of value of personnel, goods, and services. Other Federal funds cannot be used as match.

Q: Do I need all the required matching resources secured prior to submission of an application?

A: Yes. Matching must be committed or secured at the time of application submission. Applications must include written documentation showing the amounts and sources of match (including both cash and in-kind contributions). Signed letters verifying matching funds for each cash and/or in-kind resource is required. For third-party contributions, a separate letter of support is required for each contribution, signed by the authorized organizational representative of the contributing organization and the applicant organization. Please read section D. Application and Submission Information of the [Notice of Funding Opportunity at Grants.gov](#) for more detailed information about this requirement.

Q: What if I do not include the required match with my application?

A: Applications that do not include matching will be ineligible for an award.

Q: Can unrecovered indirect cost be used as part of the matching?

A: No. It is unallowable to use unrecovered indirect costs as part of the match requirement. Unrecovered indirect cost means the difference between the amount charged to the Federal award and the amount that could have been charged to the Federal award under the potential recipients approved negotiated indirect cost rate.

Indirect Costs

Q: What rate should I use for indirect costs?

A: A Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) is required if requesting indirect costs. The NICRA must be in PDF format and attached to the Grants.gov application package. Applicants selected for an award who do not have a NICRA but request indirect costs must accept and sign the 10 percent de minimis rate as a condition of the award, which constitutes establishing an approved rate. Recipients who do not request indirect costs are prohibited from charging indirect costs to a Federal award.

Allowable/Unallowable Costs

Q: Is equipment an allowable expenditure?

A: Funds may not be used for [general purpose equipment](#) or lease agreements to own (i.e., lease-to-own or rent-to-own) such equipment.



Q: Are equipment, vehicles, land, and building space allowable costs?

A: Projects with cost-effective budgets including the rental of [special purpose equipment](#), vehicles, land, and building space during the length of the cooperative agreement instead of purchase will be given higher consideration. Any lease or rental agreements must terminate at the end of the project period.

Q: What costs are considered allowable?

A: Materials, supplies, and other costs related to the development and testing of strategies to generate compost and reduce food waste is allowable. However, the per unit cost of each supply item must be below \$5,000 dollars. Any item with a per unit cost above \$5,000 dollars is considered equipment.

Q: Is building a non-permanent or permanent structure an allowable cost?

A: Building a non-permanent, temporary or movable structure is an allowable cost. Building a permanent structure, which may include, but not limited to, pouring concrete, laying asphalt or installing plumbing is also an allowable cost.

Evaluation Process

Q: Can I be an application reviewer?

A: USDA is not seeking external reviewers for this funding opportunity. Applications submitted to NRCS for the FY 2020 CCFWR Project will be evaluated by a panel of internal USDA reviewers to ensure that applicants receive full and uniform consideration, and that the selected proposals merit receipt of Federal funds. If you are a USDA employee and would like to receive more information about being a reviewer, please email UrbanAgriculture@usda.gov.

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